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INFO RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1706
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUALA LUMPUR 000319

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SIPDIS

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STATE FOR OES/AIAG FOR AMBASSADOR LOFTIS, DWINN AND CPATTERSON
STATE FOR REO/BKK FOR HHOWARD
STATE FOR OES/IHA, AAIT, MED
PASS TO HHS FOR OGH STEIGER AND HICKEY
PASS TO CDC ATLANTA FOR CCID AND COGH
PASS TO USDA FOR APHIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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AMGT, MG

SUBJECT: MGSF01: Malaysia's Response to Global Swine Flu
Outbreak--End-of-Day Report #1

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Malaysian government on April 27 placed the country on "high alert" to fully monitor the flu's spread in country. The Malaysian Ministry of Health has been working closely with World Health Organization (WHO) to ensure that proactive measures are being taken to protect the health of the public. Health Minister Liow Tiong Lai stated that so far no cases have been reported to the Health Ministry. However, Liow issued a directive for all health practitioners to report to local district health offices patients with symptoms of influenza-like illness and/or severe pneumonia who had visited Mexico, California or Texas after April 17. In addition, the Ministry of Health began placing health officers at all travel entry points in Malaysia to screen travelers suspected of carrying the illness. Travelers arriving from Latin American countries are being manually screened, while all other international passengers are required to complete health declaration forms. In addition, thermo scanners will be placed at international ports of entry within three days. Local newspapers report that the Health Ministry has advised Malaysians against travelling to Canada, Mexico and selected US states. Meanwhile, the local Federation of Livestock Farmers' Association of Malaysia urged the government of Malaysia (GOM) to stop all pork imports. The Veterinary Services Director-General, however, reminded the public that Swine Flu cannot be spread by eating pork.

2. (SBU) COMMENT: According to WHO officials in country, the government of Malaysia's (GOM) response thus far to the international health situation has been "very good." Both MOH and WHO officials claimed that lessons learned from SARS cases in 2004 had taught the GOM to be proactive in its response to the current influenza outbreak. Embassy is in daily communication with key GOM officials responsible for managing Malaysia's response to this international health situation. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

Ministry of Health Begins Passenger Screening

3. (U) Both the MOH and Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) Operating agency, Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd., are collaborating with Malaysia's Immigration Department to monitor passengers

arriving from Mexico via the U.S. and Europe. Currently, Malaysia does not have any direct flights to or from Mexico. Beginning on April 27, the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) established a special docking bay and waiting lounge for flights originating from New York City and Los Angeles. KLIA Sr. General Manager of Operations Mr. Azmi Murad told ESTHOff that KLIA began monitoring passengers arriving from the U.S. the morning of April 27, including passengers originating from New York City and Los Angeles. Passengers arriving from international destinations from Latin American countries are being manually screened by health officials, while all other passengers arriving from international destinations are only required to complete health declaration forms, which includes information regarding past travel and health condition over the past ten days. According to news reports, thermal scanners will be placed at international airports to speed up the screening process within three days. In addition, the Malaysian government plans to procure seven new thermal scanners capable of mass screening.

GOM Advises Against Travel to U.S., Canada and Mexico

14. (U) The Health Ministry has advised Malaysians against traveling to selected U.S. states, Canada, and Mexico, starting April 27. Health Minister Liow stated that "although the World Health Organization (WHO) has not called for any sanction in travel or trade with [the aforementioned] affected countries, I would like to advise all Malaysians against travelling to these places." Liow emphasized, however, that while H1N1-related deaths have been reported in Mexico, no swine flu-related deaths have been reported in the U.S. or Canada.

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Directive to Report ILI Cases to Health Ministry

15. (U) Liow issued a directive to all public and private medical practitioners to report to district health offices any patient recently treated for influenza-like illness (ILI) or severe pneumonia symptoms who also recently travelled to one or more of the countries with reported cases of H1N1 after April 17. Liow added that patients who test positive for the H1N1 virus would be quarantined and treated at Putrajaya and Serdang hospitals, both located 30km outside of Kuala Lumpur in the federal administrative capital of Malaysia.

Limits to Pork Importation Advised by Industry Group

16. (U) The local Federation of Livestock Farmers' Association of Malaysia has urged the GOM to stop all pork imports. However, the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) Director-General Dr. Abd Aziz Jamaluddin reminded the public that swine flu cannot be spread by eating pork. Meanwhile, Abd Aziz suggested that the H1N1 vaccine should be injected into pigs as a preventive measure and is currently awaiting clearance from the Health Ministry to do so. Thus far, DVS has not received any reports of swine flu symptoms among livestock in the Malaysia.

Post Activities: Warden Message and Town Hall Meeting

17. (SBU) Post issued an Embassy-wide Notice alerting staff of recent developments surrounding H1N1, per ALDAC guidance April 26. The Management Notice included information on personal hygiene practices to prevent the spread of influenza-like illnesses. A Town Hall meeting with Embassy staff and dependents will be held on the morning of April 29. The Consular Section has forwarded the Mexico City Travel Alert as Post's Warden Message to Americans in Malaysia. The section is currently clearing with Consular Affairs a Warden Message with information specific to Malaysia. MedOff distributed a First Aid Survey soliciting volunteers for a Pandemic Response Team, and other RSO/MED volunteer needs, as well as conducted a complete inventory of PPE and found that supplies were adequate.

KEITH